Beat: Travel

The ORIENT EXPRESS became a Timeless Symbol of the Art of Travel

Partnership with CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES

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USPA NEWS - The Orient Express made its mark on History like no other Train. From its 1883 launch at the Gare de l´Est in PARIS, it soon became a timeless symbol of the art of travel. During World War I, France´s fleet of sleeper coaches was requisitioned and later scattered or destroyed...

The Orient Express made its mark on History like no other Train. From its 1883 launch at the Gare de l´Est in PARIS, it soon became a timeless symbol of the art of travel. During World War I, France´s fleet of sleeper coaches was requisitioned and later scattered or destroyed. But one of its coaches went down in history. Car No. 2419 had been converted into an office for French General (later Marshal) Ferdinand Foch, and it was there that the armistice was signed on 11 November 1918.

In June 1940, the German army used the same car to sign the armistice with France, and then took it as a trophy to Berlin, where city residents toured it. In 1944, the SS blew it up as Allied forces advanced on Berlin... The Orient Express was created by Georges Nagelmakers, a young Belgian engineer. During a trip to the United States in 1868, he travelled on Pullman trains and experienced their famous sleeping cars. So, he returned to Europe inspired by an idea : to create luxury trains for a wealthy clientele.

The early success of the Orient Express spawned a new generation of luxury trains“”the Nord Express, the Sud Express, the Calais Nice Rome Express, and many others. In addition to transporting passengers across Europe, including parts east, and Asia, Georges Nagelmakers founded Compagnie Internationale des Grands Hôtels to accommodate them when they reached their destination... Before World War I, the Coaches were made of teak, but after 1920, wood was replaced with metal to eliminate creaking. French glass designer René Lalique decorated the walls of the dining cars with glass panels inlaid in Cuban mahogany, making the Orient Express a showcase of Art Nouveau style.

Many celebrities slept in the luxurious berths of the Orient Express, including King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy, American actress Marlene Dietrich, and Russian ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev. Other well-known passengers were adventurers and spies, from Lawrence of Arabia to Mata-Hari. Later, Literature and Films fuelled the legend of the Orient Express, and it inspired Authors from Joseph Kessel and Ernest Hemingway to Agatha Christie.

Unable to survive World War II and later the Cold War, the Orient Express made its last commercial return journey between Paris and Istanbul in 1977. But it still exists as a seven-car train, and all of its carriages are listed as French historic monuments.

A press Conference was held at Gare du Nord on March 28, 2017 to present the Orient Express with the presence of Guillaume PEPY, CEO of SNCF (French Railways), Catherine PEGARD, CEO of Chateau de Versailles

During that Press Conference was introduced the New Cultural Season of CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES in partnership with SNCF and Orient Express. The Palace, the Museum and the Estate of Versailles has been a Public Establishment of an administrative nature since 1995, with independent administrative and financial management. It is supervised by the French Ministry for Culture and Communication. At its Head is Catherine PEGARD, Chairman of the Public Establishment.

* During the New Musical Season, the Palace of Versailles will be hosting a number of Operas, Concerts, Gala Evenings and Ballets in some of its most exceptional settings including the Royal Opera House, and the Royal Chapel.

* On Saturdays and Sundays the Equestrian Academy managed by Bartabas presents its repertory piece, La Voie de l´écuyer, which takes the form of a new opus each year and combines the art of dressage, singing, stage fencing, Kyudo (Japanese archery) and dance.

* Fêtes Galantes 2017 : a Fancy Dress Evening in the Hall of Mirrors; The thematic 2017 is Peter the Great´s visit to Chateau de Versailles. One of the grandest official receptions of the Ancien Regime was organised for Tsar Peter the Great of Russia who spent two months in France in 1717. It was a decisive step for the diplomatic rapprochement between France and Russia and also for the

influence of French arts on Russia. The Tsar admired European culture and especially the French one and extensively visited the magnificent royal buildings from the Tuileries to the Invalides, the Hotel de la Monnaie, the Observatoire and the Gobelins...

* The Musical Fountains Show (From 1 April to 29 October 2017). You can discover and enjoy the extraordinary beauty of the ChÃ¢teau de Versailles Gardens, of its Fountains playing to the tune of period music. For 350 years the success of the Fountains has never waned.

* The Musical Gardens (From 31 March to 31 October 2017). The largest open air Sculpture Museum in the world to the sound of Baroque Music (Lully, Rameau, Charpentier, Leclair, Campra“¦) at the heart of ChÃ¢teau de Versailles classic French style Gardens.

* Contemporary Art in Versailles: 'Winter Journey' (21 October 2017 to 7 January 2018). For its 10th contemporary Art Exhibition, the Palace of Versailles is organising a unique visit through the groves titled 'Winter Journey', curated by the Palais de Tokyo. Every year since 2008 the Palace of Versailles has held an exhibition dedicated to a French or foreign artist,

* Visitors to Versailles 1682 - 1789 Exhibition has been jointly produced by the Palace of Versailles and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It will be on display in Versailles from 24 October 2017 to 25 February 2018 and will later be held in New York from 9 April 2018 to 29 July 2018. The Exhibition is the first on this subject and will turn the spotlight on these visitors through more than 300 works from the late 17th century to the French Revolution. With portraits and sculptures, Court attire, travel guides, tapestries, Sevres and Meissen porcelain, display weapons and snuffboxes.

* PETER THE GREAT, a Tsar in France. 1717 (30 May - 24 September 2017) at the Grand Trianon. The Exhibition is dedicated to Tsar Peter the Great´s trip in and around Paris in May and June 1717, and will commemorate the 300th anniversary of this diplomatic visit. Exceptional collaboration between the Palace of Versailles and the Hermitage Museum, the Exhibition will present over 150 works including paintings, sculptures, decorative artworks and tapestries, as well as plans, medallions, scientific instruments, books and manuscripts,two thirds of which belong to the collections of the prestigious Museum in Saint Petersburg.

Ruby BIRD
http://www.portfolio.uspa24.com/
Yasmina BEDDOU
http://www.yasmina-beddou.uspa24.com/

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local

(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com